

# Acupuncture and Dry needling

## Understanding the differences between Physical therapists and Acupuncturists using needles

Dry needling is a form of acupuncture made popular by physical therapists. It involves the insertion of acupuncture needles into trigger points.

Trigger Points are described as hyper-irritable areas in the muscles that are tender to pressure. Some trigger points correspond exactly with acupuncture points while others are considered extra points.

Acupuncturists are the experts of dry needling. We receive over 2000 hours of training in the safe and effective use of needles. We are trained to identify and treat trigger points, motor points, and acupuncture points. We study both western anatomy and Chinese medical philosophy. Like physical therapists, we are trained in anatomy, biomechanics of injuries and muscle imbalances.

The difference lies in the amount of training we receive. Acupuncturists receive extensive training in the safe use of needles while, physical therapists who are also highly trained clinicians, receive minimal training for dry needling. Rather than being part of their core education, it is taught to them at weekend workshops.

If you are looking for dry needling ask an acupuncturist.  
We are the experts in the use of needles.

### Definitions:

- **Trigger points** are sensitive areas in the muscle or connective tissue that becomes painful when compressed. Pressing on a trigger point can cause referred pain and can help identify the external area in the body generating the pain.
- **Motor points** are electro-physiologically defined, as the point with the highest excitability of the muscle. It is thought to be the area where the motor neuron innervates the muscle.
- **Acupuncture Points** are any of the specific locations on the body that in the practice of acupuncture and acupressure are stimulated to produce beneficial health effects, such as the relief of pain or promotion of healing.